THE MILAN EXCHANGE.

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MILAN, - - - TENNESSEE.

GRANDMOTHER.

In the flickering firelight shadows
That glimmer, and quiver, and glow
Grandma and little Mabel
Are rocking to and fro.

The baby is cooing and laughing,
But Grandmother does not hear,
For her thoughts are wandering backward
Over many a long-gone year.

She is not rocking *our* baby,
As she softly swings to and fro—
But she holds in her arms "little Sammy,"
Dead—seventy years ago.

Her bonny wee, brown-eyed baby!
She lets her spinning-wheel rest,
And in the little log cabin,
She holds her first child to her breast.

Rocking, and soothing, and crooning,
While the shadows dance on her face,
And the flames are roaring and crackling
In the old-fashioned fire-place.

A blooming, red-cheeked little woman,
With eyes as black as can be,
The wild, restless spirit of girlhood
Subdued by maternity.

And Grandpa is sitting beside her—
Young, and broad-shouldered and strong;
And he smiles, half proudly, half gravely,
As he hears his little wife's song.

The baby's eyelids are drooping,
And his spirit is far away
In dreamland, where mortal children
With the little angels play.

* * * * *

But Grandma's head droops lower,
And, I think, with tear-dimmed eyes,
She sees, far away in the church-yard,
Where a little green mound lies.

Oh! the little blue cradle is empty;
And Grandma's arms are, too,
But they feel so heavy and listless,
As they never used to do.

Sorrowful, lonely and silent,
She hears her little one cry,
And she thinks he is fretful without her,
So far away in the sky.

And she wonders, with feverish longing,
"Do they give him a mother's care?
Do the angels curl on their fingers
The rings of his golden hair?"

* * * * *

This was Grandmother's first sorrow;
And her step was never so light,
Her cheeks were a trifle paler,
And her eyes a little less bright.

Rocking, and crooning, and soothing,
Softly she swings to and fro.
She is putting to sleep "little Sammy,"
Dead—seventy years ago.

—*N. Y. Observer.*

LITTLE CARROTSON'S HOLIDAY.

Mr. Cutbill was a busy lawer, a bachelor and not very fond of children, so that his married sister, who lived in the country, made a mistake when she wrote to beg that he would provide a day and an evening's amusement for little Carrotson, who was returning to Westminster School after his Christmas holidays. The boy was due at his tutor's house in Dean's Yard on a Wednesday; but Mr. Cutbill's sister suggested that if he came up to London on the Tuesday her brother might make him spend an agreeable day and take him to see a pantomime afterwards. Little Carrotson was not related in any way to Mr. Cutbill's sister, but he was the son of a friend of hers, and was said to be an intelligent boy, well worth knowing.

Mr. Cutbill consented to entertain the youth, and little Carrotson accordingly arrived at the lawyer's private residence in Gower street one January morning, towards half-past nine. It was raining hard, and Mr. Cutbill thought it would never do to take the boy out of doors in such weather. He would be getting wet feet, catch cold, and so forth; besides, the lawyer was absolutely obliged to go to his office for two or three hours; so, as soon as Carrotson had been installed opposite a cup of coffee and a sausage, Mr. Cutbill said to him, in a tone that was meant to be paternal: "Look here, James; can I trust you to be a good boy while I am out? I shall be back for luncheon, and then I'll take you to see the wax-works, and in the evening we'll go to Drury Lane. So, as you're going to have two treats to-day, I hope you'll keep out of mischief."

"Oh, certainly, if you wish it," said little Carrotson, eyeing the lawyer with some surprise.

"If you'll mind not to leave this room, and not to play with the fire, I'll see if I have any picture books." * * *

"Don't trouble yourself, sir," answered the boy, on whose chubby face there was a slight flush of offended dignity. "There's a friend of mine who lives in the neighborhood, and I thought of going to hunt him up."

"A friend? Is he a boy, like yourself?"

"Well, he's fourteen."

It was so long since Mr. Cutbill had been a boy that he had forgotten all the habits of the species and the manner of addressing them. In the red-headed, blue-eyed, merry-faced lad before him he saw only a mere child who wanted to go and splash about in the rain, perhaps, to make mud pies and to be run over by cabs. "No, I must positively forbid that," he said. "You are under my charge to-day and must do as I tell you. Think what your mamma would say if you were brought home on a stretcher." Then, suddenly, a happy thought occurred to Mr. Cutbill. Why should he not set the boy to do a little useful work by way of making the time pass? He had read somewhere that boys enjoy a half-holiday better than a whole one; so he darted out of the room and returned with his washing book. "Look here, James; I'll see how you can do sums. Just go through this book, add up all the weekly accounts of the past quarter, and then divide the total of the number of weeks so as to get at the average of my weekly expenditure. If you do all that correctly by the time I return, and without making any blots, I'll give you half a crown to spend at school."

Having said this, Mr. Cutbill retired, thinking he had hit upon an ingenious device for keeping his charge out of mischief. Little Carrotson's face was a picture.

Public school boys have strong expressions for describing such men as Mr. Cutbill; they call them "howling snobs."

The egregious "cheek" of forbidding Carrotson "to play with the fire," and the utter villainy of compelling him to do sums in a house where he had come as a guest in holiday time, could only be matched by the impudent offer of half a crown to one who had no less than four sovereigns in his pocket. The whole thing was indeed so "rich" that after a brief spell of speechless indignation Carrotson laughed. He took up the lawyer's "beastly" washing book, and got through the work set him in half an hour, after which he added some supplementary averages of his own. He computed how many shirts Mr. Cutbill would wear in the course of a lifetime, supposing he lived to the age of seventy, and how much he would disburse in getting his socks washed during the same period, and so forth, but these calculations only amused him for another half hour. Then he yawned, stared out of the window, and was startled by the postman's double knock. What devil of vindictive mischief was it that made him whisper then: "By Jove, I'll just answer the old cad's letter for him!"

Little Carrotson slunk into the passage and found four letters in the box. He left one, in case a servant should come up and collect the delivery; but the other three he carried into the dining room where he had been working. The breakfast things had not yet been removed, and there was some water in the slop-basin, by means of which the boy speedily ungummed the three envelopes. To say that he felt the slightest compunction at what he was doing would be incorrect; he thought only of having a lark, and paying out old Cutbill for his snobbery.

The first letter was a printed invitation to dine with a Peer; the second was a note from a lady who signed herself "Flora Higgins," and wrote thanking Mr. Cutbill for a legal opinion he had given her in a friendly way. She alluded several times to her daughter Rose, who was so pleased to hear Mr. Cutbill's cold was better, and hoped so much Mr. Cutbill would look in soon to take a cup of tea, and hear her sing one of his favorite songs which she had been practicing. The third letter was in a man's hand, and referred evidently to some differences that had arisen between Mr. Cutbill and the writer. The latter—one Brown—wrote, however, to say that he trusted Mr. Cutbill would frankly accept the explanation he had tendered, and that the painful misunderstanding between them would now cease.

It has been said that young Carrotson was an intelligent boy. He proved it by the calm deliberation with which he now went to work; for, having found a sample of Mr. Cutbill's handwriting in the adjoining study, to which he repaired on tip-toe, he applied himself during half an hour to imitating that writing till he attained proficiency. He then indited the three following answers to the lawyer's correspondents, his face being as serious as a Judge's whilst he wrote, though there was a suspicious twinkling in his eyes.

To the Peer he addressed himself thus:

"My Lord—It is very kind of you to invite me to dinner, but I am afraid I cannot accept, because since I last saw you I have suddenly changed my political opinions and think you are altogether wrong about everything. I shall be happy to make friends with you again if you will agree to think as I do; but, perhaps, being obstinate, you won't like to do this.

"So no more at present. From your lordship's obedient servant. Long Cutbill."

Next came Mrs. Higgin's turn:

"My Dear Mrs. Higgins—Your kind letter has pleased me so much because of its allusion to dear Rosa. I am so fond of her that I have been quite miserable from wondering all night whether she would marry me, and that must excuse the shakiness of my handwriting this morning. I am sure I should make a good husband if Rosa would promise to keep my washerwoman's account properly balanced. I am very particular about this. Please think over the matter and let me have an early, favorable answer, which will oblige, yours truly, Long Cutbill."

P. S.—Shouldn't I like to catch dear Rosa under the mistletoe.

The gentleman who wanted to be reconciled to Mr. Cutbill came in for this kindly missive:

"My Dear Brown—It was I who was in the wrong all through our quarrel, so please say nothing more in the matter. I have a vile temper, which I freely acknowledge, and if you had kicked me down stairs when we last met it would have served me right, though I might have objected at the time. Pray come to dine with me on Saturday evening at seven o'clock, and we will have one of the best bottles of champagne out of my cellar. Don't trouble yourself to write and say you'll come, as I shall be out of town to-morrow and next day, but will be back in time for our dinner, which shall be a rouser. Ever your friend,

L. Cutbill."

Little Carrotson put the letters in envelopes, directed them and stamped them with stamps of his own, after which, having hesitated a moment, he flung the three original letters into the fire. He had thought at first of restoring them to their covers and laying them on the lawyer's table, but he concluded that the fun would be much greater if he simply suppressed them. He was seated by the fire, studying the police reports in the *Times*, and looking as innocent as possible, when Mr. Cutbill returned home, toward one o'clock.

Now, if the lawyer had behaved "like a gentleman" for the rest of the day, little Carrotson might have had mercy on him. The boy was in doubt about posting the letters he had written, and kept them in his pocket like loaded weapons, ready for reprisals if Mr. Cutbill "checked" him any further. Unfortunately, the lawyer was a dull person, and committed blunder upon blunder in dealing with his small but sensitive guest. He took him to the Tussaud show, but opposite the wax effigy of William Rufus he asked him at what date that monarch had ascended the throne. He refused to let little Carrotson go into the Chamber of Horrors, saying it would excite him. He bade him admire the noble brow of Richard Cobden and took a mean advantage of the occasion to bore him about free trade. Finally, he drew down on himself the contempt of Carrotson by misquoting Shakespeare as they were surveying Charles Kemble in the part of Hamlet: "That's Hamlet saying: 'My kingdom for a horse,'" remarked the mendacious lawyer.

At Drury Lane in the evening it was worse. Little Carrotson derived some amusement from the pantomime, and almost relented in his revengeful purposes; but the miserable lawyer refused to stay for the harlequinade. He said that little boys ought not to be kept out of their beds after half-past ten. Little Carrotson silently ground his teeth, and from that moment Mr. Cutbill's punishment was decreed beyond hope of pardon. The three letters were posted in the pillar-box of Dean's Yard on the following day, when the boy returned to school.

They were destined to have very remarkable effects on the lawyer's future. In the first place there came to him on the Friday morning a short but sweet note from Mrs. Higgins:

My Dear Mr. Cutbill—Your original and amusing way of proposing for dear Rosa's hand has made us both laugh, but my beloved child is quite alive to the honor which you are conferring on her, and I can promise you that all the affection which you lavish upon her shall be amply repaid in kind. Please come at once; she is waiting for you. Very faithfully yours, Flora Higgins.

"What the deuce does this mean?" asked Mr. Cutbill, with a blank look. He wrote at once for explanations, and then received a curt note, begging him to call at Mrs. Higgins'. That lady and her daughter imagined that the lawyer cherished the unchivalrous design of retracing his proposal, and this they were determined to prevent. Mr. C. was confronted with his own handwriting. He vowed it was not his, but was driven at last to own that possibly he had written the letter in his sleep. He had heard of such things happening, and though he did not believe he was a somnambulist, he could not, of course, swear that such was not the case.

"But if you wrote the letter in your sleep, did it betray your unspoken thoughts?" was the clever Mrs. Higgins' next searching question. She smiled kindly as she said this, and Mr. Cutbill gave in. After all, why shouldn't he marry Rosa? He returned to Gower street an engaged man; but by that time he had come to guess who was the culprit who had played him this trick, and he thought with indignation of the precocious depravity evinced by little Carrotson.

This was on the Saturday, and Mr. Cutbill had scarcely reached home when Brown, his quondam friend, marched in with a beaming face. It should be said that this Brown had behaved very badly to Cutbill, but now there was emotion in his eyes as he advanced upon the lawyer and forcibly grasped his hand. "You have acted nobly in forgiving me, Cutbill. * * * I shall never forget it. * * * No more generous letter than yours was ever penned; but enough, I've brought a good appetite with me."

"I don't in the least understand you," Mr. Cutbill was about to say, coldly, but he checked himself. Since Brown praised him for his generosity, it was as well to take credit for such a rare virtue. Brown had evidently come to dinner, and as the lawyer always dined well, his sudden arrival did not matter much. But over their wine, by-and-by, when the two gentlemen had quite cemented their reconciliation, Mr. Cutbill thought it best to tell the truth, and avow that it was to a pestilent Westminster boy, named Carrotson, that he was indebted for the pleasure of having Brown to dine at his table. As if to corroborate that assertion, that very evening's post brought a letter from the lawyer's third correspondent, the Peer, which ran thus:

"My Dear Mr. Cutbill.—What on earth is the meaning of the inclosed note, which, I presume, is a forgery? Yours, truly, C."

A visit which Mr. Cutbill paid to Westminster School on the Monday night might have had distressing consequences for little Carrotson, but for Mrs. Higgins' interference. As it was, the lawyer only went for the purpose of asking how many letters Carrotson had thought proper to write in his name, and he smiled—rather a grim smile, though—in cautioning the boy against practical jokes for the future. Little Carrotson laid the lesson well to heart. He got many a welcome reminder to this end from dear Rosa, who, after her marriage, become his ally, and often invited him to dine in Gower street, where she gave him no washing bills to balance, but treated him like a man, and tipped him sovereigns, earning in response his unqualified opinion as to her being a "brick."—*Graphic.*

—Twelve boxes of young monkeys arrived at New York recently. They were sea-sick all the way over, howled and coughed like babies. Among them were two "holy monkeys" worshiped by certain African tribes. They—the monkeys, not the tribes—are covered with long, soft, white hair. The importer said there weren't monkeys enough in this country to supply the demand. They die of consumption at the rate of five hundred annually.—*Chicago Times.*

—Mary Swain had her "spine twisted" in a crowded car of the Continental Passenger Railway, at Philadelphia, and a court awarded her $12,000 damages. This is probably the largest back pay ever drawn by a woman.—*Free Press.*

Youths' Department.

THE SELFISH OYSTER.

There once was a selfish old Oyster,
Who lived like a monk in a cloister,
Safely housed in his shell,
Like the monk in his cell,
Though the bivalve's apartment was moister.

Anchored tight in the mud of the bay
This lazy old party did stay.
Nor cared he to roam
Very far from his home;
For exertion, he thought, did not pay.

And you will be wondering, I think,
What he did for his victuals and drink.
Well, the Oyster was sly,
And when young crabs came by,
He would catch them as quick as a wink.

Then in him the poor crabs had to stay,
Till in time they had melted away.
So the Oyster got fatter,
And the crabs—but no matter—
For crabs have no souls, people say.

"And oho!" said the Oyster, said he;
"What a lucky old party I be!
Like a King in his pride
I wait here, and the tide
Every day brings my living to me."

But there came a grim Star-fish, who spied
Our friend lying flat on his side;
For the greedy old sinner
Had just had his dinner,
And now could not run had he tried.

With a spring to the Oyster he came,
And he threw his five arms round the same.
He shut off his breath,
And he squeezed him to death.
Then he ate him, nor felt any shame.

The point of this story, my dears,
Just "as plain as a pikestaff" appears.
But please give attention,
While briefly I mention
The moral again, for your ears.

Don't be greedy and live but to eat,
Caring only for bread and for meat;
Nor selfishly dwell
All alone in your shell—
Don't be oysters, in short, I repeat.

But you'll find it much better for you
To be kind, and unselfish, and true;
Then you'll not lack a friend
Your cause to defend,
When a Star-fish rolls into your view.

—*George J. Webster, in St. Nicholas.*

RAISING HIS OWN FRUIT.

An Example for Boys in the Country.

"I think there never was a boy who did not love to eat every kind of fruit!"

This sage remark was made by Fred Canfield to his elder brother as they looked wistfully over the fence between their own fruitless garden and Mr. Black's very tempting orchard, which in the proper season produced abundantly apples, pears, grapes, peaches, plums, apricots and all the small fruits known to the intelligent gardener. Just at that moment Mr. Black himself appeared among the trees, and Fred, forgetting his usual modesty, called out: "Mr. Black, may I take some of these apples that hang over the fence?"

For some unaccountable reason the gentleman spoken to was not in his usual mood of generosity, and, answering the boy quite roughly, replied: "Why don't you grow apples for yourself?" Poor Fred, who was already moving towards the attractive tree, turned quickly away, and the tears started in his eyes.

"I told you not to ask him," said his brothers, reproachfully, "but you paid no attention to me; you will mind me, next time, I think."

"I will have fruit of my own, next time!" said Fred, suppressing a sob and drying his tears lest any one might see his mortification; for a spirit of independence had been awakened by the late affront.

"There is not a tree in our garden," said his brother, "and you know the place is not our own; if you were to plant trees you might never eat the fruit." "It will be good for other boys then," said Fred, with determination in his tone. "I will plant them, and I may eat of the fruit, too!"

His brother laughed at this newly-formed resolution; but it only fixed more firmly Fred's manly and independent decision, and he began at once to learn the season for planting the different kinds of fruit-trees. Without losing a day, he was soon at work laying out a bed for strawberries. The plants were procured from a neighbor, who was digging up some of his and who said that any one who wanted them might have them.

Fred next found two nice apple trees growing wild in the wood. As they were just the size for transplanting, when November came he removed them to his little garden. A young plum tree was dug up from the fence, with his neighbor's permission, and several peach trees, which came up of themselves the spring before, and stood in a cluster in the back yard—all were transplanted to the new garden. Some grape-vine cuttings were carefully planted in a damp corner near a high wall, and a cherry tree from the roadside found its place in Fred's orchard in the early spring.

Our little gardener was more and more interested day by day, as he watched the growth of his trees. His delight was boundless, however, when he saw the strawberries put forth blossoms. "Now," said he, "I shall say nothing about them till they are ripe, and then surprise mother with a dish of strawberries and cream."

Fred was not sparing with the watering-pot, and when other boys were romping along the street, he was found in his garden, pulling up weeds, training his grape-vines, or, after sunset, sprinkling the young plants with water. In the meantime he learned how to graft and bud his trees and, when an opportunity offered, he added another tree or picked up some new information about the cultivation of fruit.

The fourth of July had come, bright and lovely, after a heavy rain of the night before. Fred was out in his garden at sunrise, for he expected something of interest there. Imagine his delight when he saw his strawberries red with ripe clusters. He gathered some of the finest, and by the time breakfast was ready he had a dish of beautiful berries placed by his mother's plate. She, too, was delighted, and praised the fruit. All the family tasted them, of course, and his little sister clapped her hands and said: "How nice, to have fruit growing in our own garden!"

Fred's vines bore some bunches of grapes the second year, and the grafts which he set in the young trees all did well. His garden was a source of great pleasure to him, and he never tired of showing to his friends his thriving and promising orchard. In a few years he had apples and pears, cherries and plums, apricots and peaches, and different kinds of small fruit. No wonder the boy was proud to hear his mother tell a friend from a distance: "We seldom buy fruit now; Fred grows it all in our own garden."

This little gardener had now grown up to be a young man, and his father had procured for him a situation in a business house in a distant town. "I want to go very much," said he, "but what will become of my garden when I am away?"

"*I* will take care of it," said his little brother, "and if it is not as fine when you return as when you leave it, you can blame me for neglect."

Though Fred grew up and prospered in other pursuits, his garden never lost its attractions and pleasant memories, and when, in after years, he revisited the home of his boyhood, before taking a seat in the house, he had to take a ramble through the garden, to look at the trees which his own hands had planted years before.

If the thousands of boys who read this would follow this boy's example, they would find a useful and delightful occupation for their spare moments, and their work would be a source of inexhaustible pleasure to the end of life. The fruit is sweetest of all when the trees that bear it has been planted by our own hands.—*Rev. R. H. Craig, in N. Y. Observer.*

The Best Kind of Fooling.

Jack and Kitty sat by the fire one windy March evening, popping corn.

"Tell you what, Kitty," said Jack. "I've thought of a boss April-fool joke to play on that new boy across the road. He's so honest and solemn, you can fool him just as easy."

"What is it?"

"Oh, I'll take a chip and write on it 'April-Fool,' and wrap it in a paper, then I'll put another paper on the outside of that, and so on, lots and lots of papers till I have a big bundle. I'll write on the outside, 'Henry Johnson, from a friend,' and the last thing before I go to bed the night before April-Fool's day I'll run over and hang it on their door-knob."

"Won't some of them see you?"

"No danger. They always go to bed early over there. I suppose because his mother is too poor to sit up and burn out wood and lights. But they get up early in the morning. He'll go out to the pump for some water, and find the bundle, and he'll think he's got something nice. Won't he be well fooled when he gets it all undone and finds nothing but a chip?"

"He's got a sister not quite as big as I am," remarked Kitty, not seeming to enter into the sport as heartily as Jack did.

"Come here," children," called their mother from the sitting-room; "and I'll suggest an improvement on Jack's plan. I dare say Mrs. Johnson would remember that it was the first of April, and tell Henry not to expect to find anything in his bundle. So a surer way to fool him would be to put something inside. There are the rubber-boots you had last year, you know, Jack, and they were so small you only wore them a trifle. You might do them up for Henry, and they would be very nice for him to wear in this spring mud."

"Mother," said Kitty, "there are my copper-toed boots that I outgrew last year. Couldn't I put them in for the little girl?"

"Certainly, dear."

Not many evenings after, you might have seen Jack and Kitty very busy in the kitchen. The rubber-boots and copper-toed ones were tied up in a snug package, and over that was wrapped no end of papers, till the bundle was almost as large as Kitty herself. Jack wrote the address, and ran over with it at bed-time, as he proposed. The Widow Johnson's light had been out for an hour, for the children had kept watch.

She found the bundle when she first got up the next morning, and carried it in to the children. "You must remember it is the first of April," she said, with a smile, "and you mustn't expect to find much in this, if it *is* heavy."

"Oh yes, it *is* April-Fool's day, isn't it?" laughed Henry. "Well, they can't fool us now, can they, Sis? But we'll undo the papers. They'll come handy for a good many things, and we shall find a stone or a brick at the last end."

So the children had lots of sport unwrapping the papers, and they were most thoroughly fooled when at last the very boots they had so much needed came to view.

"I'd like to be fooled this way every year," cried Henry, storming about in his new boots.

"So would I," chimed in his little sister, looking happily down at the copper-toes.—*Youth's Companion.*

—It requires no great stretch of conscience to explain why we have had such a vast excess of weather—such extremes of heat and cold, wet and dryness—this year, as compared with previous years. Formerly a large part of the appropriation for the weather bureau was embezzled; now it is all expended for weather. Hence the superfluity.—*The Household.*

—The sunflower craze is coming to a bud.